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THE 4-H RECREATIONAL PROGRAM IN OUR COUNTY

A radio talk by Kenneth Pickett, 4-H club boy, Providence County, Rhode Island, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, August 4, 1934, and broadcast over a network of 48 associate NBC stations.

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Recreational training is one of the important parts of the 4-H program in Rhode Island. In the past couple of years this has been further emphasized through the establishment of recreational councils in each county. Each club has been entitled to send one or more representatives who meet together at regular periods under a trained recreation specialist to learn games, songs, story telling and folk dancing. 4-H clubs may apply to these councils for help. Four members are often sent as a group from the council to conduct a recreational program for a local club.

Usually the song leader opens the program with group singing. Such numbers as the "Plowing Song", "The Song of Health" and "The 4-H Friendship Song", are used. Stunt songs prove popular as they increase enthusiasm and interest. The boys and younger men enjoy singing the American cowboy and the Chantey songs, and holding the interest of the boys is most important in having a successful evening.

Story telling is also popular. At least one story with a moral is used which is balanced by jokes and stories of adventure.

We find that our groups are interested in doing things definitely changed from the daily routine. Our game instructor tries to pick out games that teach coordination, team play, self control and quick thinking. Physical activities are most interesting to the average 4-H member. Relays, circle games and obstacle races are most popular, while pantomines, charades and guessing games hold a close second.

Much thought has to be given to the meeting place, and the program has to be built around the type of facilities that are available. If the meeting is at a community house or hall, folk dancing may be included as a part of the evening program.

In my own community an abandoned one-room school house was loaned to the 4-H club by the school committee and as a project in conjunction with the mothers and fathers of the members a fine community house has been developed.

It started by re-conditioning the building. First, the electric fixtures were replaced and extra outlets added for a stove and lights. Painting and whitewashing came next. New curtains were made by the girls and stenciled with the 4-H emblem. Pictures were hung and a piano placed in the building. This past year at least one evening a week has found the 4-H club members and friends gathered for a recreational evening. Music was furnished by some of the members. Piano, violin, harmonica and saw provided the rhythm for the folk dancing.

Now that summer is here groups of club members, both boys and girls, meet after supper and spend the time until dark pitching horseshoes. The girls are close competitors and at the close of the season the boys and girls will play a series of games to determine the champions.

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Recreation has meant a great deal to our community as it has brought together both parents and 4-H club members, it has shown the community that parents and children can mingle on common ground and find enjoyment and pleasure in doing so. It has developed a bond of friendship with our neighboring clubs who have been our guests at different times and has taught us all sportsmanship, cooperation and how to be a good loser. This promotes a broader and more interesting view of life and helps us all to work better and play better.

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